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Evaluation of Staff Performance in Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria Ibadan (Crin)

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Abstract
This studyfocused on the procedure of staff evaluation and performance in the Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria (CRIN) with a view toassess the evaluation performance system of staff in CRIN. It alsoappraised the current evaluation process procedure in CRIN, and analyzed problems &challenges associated with the performance evaluation system in the Institute. The effectiveness of evaluation instrument employed by the Institute for the performance assessment of staff negates the evaluation method on staff related habits.Both primary and secondary sources of data were employed for the study. Primary sources of data were utilized through in-depth interviews. The study population comprised the staff of Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria (CRIN) that was in four main departments. It was revealed that the information generated from the performance appraisal exercise is used only for promotion of staff and not for other developmental needs of the Public Servants such as trainings and development, inter-cadre transfer, and staff deployment objective assessment of staff was also absent. The study concluded that the procedure of performance appraisal of Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria (CRIN) was defective and counterproductive.

Keywords:
APER; evaluation; performance; appraisal; procedure

1.0 Introduction

Only a minority of activities in personnel management are concerned with evaluating employees as individuals. These activities include evaluation of performance, grievance and disciplinary matters. It is crucial to carry out this kind of evaluation regularly which focuses on the attention not only on individual but on jobs, structures, procedures or people in groups. It is often done annually, but it could be carried out every six months, or even every three months in certain circumstances. Thus, for example, job evaluation focuses on jobs, not on job holder; job design and organization development focus on jobs/task structure wage and salary administration focus on procedures, whilst manpower planning and collective bargaining focus on people in groups.

It is important that the procedure remains largely similar year upon year (apart from necessary updating of the evaluation system).

The evaluating of individual employee in terms of his/her job performance is a task requiring a quality of manager's judgment which places a considerable responsibility on the managers/supervisors involved. It is a task that is delicate as well as complex. The implicit logic in evaluation performance is that in order to get employees to direct their efforts towards achievements of organizational objectives, management must tell employees what to do, judge/evaluate how well they have done and reward or punish them accordingly. The objectives of evaluation performance are to:

i. know the employees' issue regarding his/her performance,
ii. the employees potential as to their involvement in the organization.
iii. find out how the organization could achieve better result.

Evaluation of staff is an important activity in Personnel Management with regards to evaluating employees as individuals in an organization. These activities include evaluation performance, grievance and disciplinary matters. Organizations exist to produce goods and services, these goods and services represent the output of the firm but the work to be performed in order to achieve this output is not to contribute to the organization goals and objectives.

The evaluation of individual employees in terms of his/her job performance is a task requiring a quality of manager's judgment which places considerable responsibility on the managers/supervisors involved. It is also believed that evaluation of staff performance involves effective communication between the individual and the organization. It is however important to know that all workers should be evaluated, from directors of large organizations to stop floor workers.

Ironically, the Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria (CRIN), which was established in Ibadan, Oyo State, on the 1st December, 1964 as a successor autonomous research organization into the Nigerian substation of the defunct West African Cocoa Research Institute (WACRI) (Nigeria Statute, Act No.6 of 1950) following the establishment in 1944 of the headquarters of the said WACRI at Tafo, Ghana with responsibility to conduct research to facilitate improved production of disease-resistant cocoa. By virtue of the Nigerian Research Institutes Act No 33 of 1964, the scope of CRIN was expanded beyond the WACRI to include research on kola and coffee in addition to cocoa. According to the expansion, CRIN objectives were mandated on five crops for further scopes which are actively conducted for research till today, namely, Cocoa, Kola, Cashew, and Tea. CRIN is organized into nine Divisions comprising of technical/research and services Divisions, namely:

i) Research and Substation(R&S)
ii) End-Uses Research(EUR)
iii) Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring and Training(PB&T)
iv) Extension and Agricultural Economics(E&AE)
v) Administration and Supplies,
vi) Finance and Accounts,
vii) Internal Audit,
viii) Library, Information and Documentation and
ix) Engineering and Maintenance

These Divisions are responsible to the Director/Chief Executive who in turn is also responsible to the Institute's Governing Board and the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. The Institute maintains a bi-lateral relationship with international organizations that deal with cocoa and some of its other mandate crops. So also it has linkages with other National Agricultural Research Institute (NARIs) states and national agencies which its technologies are disseminated.

The Institute as today has a total staff strength of seven hundred and twenty-seven (727), made up of One hundred and thirty-six (136) research scientists, laboratory technologists and agricultural superintendents, one hundred and twenty

(120) professionals in administration and finance, two hundred and twenty-three (223) in engineering works and two hundred and fifty-six (256) semi-skilled and unskilled personnel. There are other physical infrastructures and social services available at the institute headquarters in Ibadan and all the above mentioned substations and experimental sites. All the members of staff work hand in hand to achieve the set goals of the institute.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The assessment being used by the Civil Service Commission in evaluatingits staff for promotion or disciplinary actions is subjected to falsehood in many ways. Consequently, this leads to the advancement of those who least deserve it and the failure to sanction those who deserve to be sanctioned. This poor performance of rating has negatively affected the Nigerian civil service without the exception of Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria resulting with undue favour to some staff while many are neglected. It is against this background that this study sets out to evaluate the staff performance in the Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria with a view to identifying the problems and challenges associated with the performance evaluation system in the Institute.

1.2 Objectives of the Book

The objectives of the study are to

(i) examine the evaluation performance system of staff being applied in Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria;

(ii) assess the current evaluation process procedure in CRIN; and

(iii) analyze problems and challenges associated with the performance evaluation system in the Institute.

Literature Review

2.1 Performance Evaluation

Human Resources Management (HRM) according to Akinpelu (2009) refers to “all the processes and activities aimed at utility all employees to achieve organizational end. He also suggested that HRM involves:

1. Staffing (whereby the organization employs the right people to achieve its goals).
2. Performance management (that this people’s action add values to the organization and they are rewarded and trained appropriately);
3. Retention (through staffing end performance management)
4. Complaints (with government legislation and ensuring appropriate policies) and
5. Change management

As the organization gets bigger, a formal performance evaluation system aids administrative decisions such as paid increases and promotion, redundancy or termination development needs and for the employees the process may assist them in career choices and may increase their commitment and satisfaction due to improvement in organization’s communication (Wiese-Buckley 1998).

However, Cole (2001) and Wright (2001) argued that people cannot be motivated. Cole and Wright went on to say that people motivate themselves and managers can provide the environment for them to be motivated. There are many ways to provide a motivational environment for employees, and these included developing their skills, giving them feedback and rewarding them in ways that means something to them. Therefore,performance evaluation can be used as a tool to assist managers in motivating their employees. Performance Management includes any management activity aimed at improving, establishing performance standards, appraising performance, setting performance plans and managing career and mobility (Matheny, 2004).

According to Baker (1988) performance evaluation can be the most powerful tool that managers have for improving productivity. When designed and used properly, it can assist organizational decisions on reward and promotions, assist employees in their development and career planning and may even increase employees motivation, commitment and satisfaction (Fletcher, 1993; Wilson and Western, 2001), especially if the performance evaluation system is aligned with the organisation's stated objectives (Wright, 2002).

However, this alignment tends not to be emphasized and as such, performance evaluation process is often seen as a chore and pointless, judging past performance against targets that are not always clear (Rudman, 2003). Performance evaluation is also capable of stirring strong feelings (Fink &Longenecker, 1998). Sadly as pointed out by Simmons (2002) a positive performance evaluation experience tend to be due to the quality of the personal relationship between manager and employee, where a good relationship creates a good evaluation experience.

2.2. Usage of Performance Evaluation

Performance evaluation is seen as key function in mostestablished models of human resource management, and may be directly or indirectly connected to payment systems as well as other components of performance management approaches (Shelley, 1999). The practice of formally evaluating employees has existed for centuries. Valance and Fellow (1999) stated that modern evaluation methods are generally traced to the United States of America (USA) army in 1813. By early 1950s, in the USA, evaluation was an accepted practice in many organizations in making administrative decisions such as promotion and salary increases; and in the 1960s and 1970s its usage increasingly included employee's development, organizations' planning, documentation and systems maintenance.

Bowles and Coates (1993) believed that the growth of performance evaluation was attributed to the 1980s where organizations had to be seen to have the competitive edge whereby its main objectives were to operate effectively and efficiently and to provide quality service/products. (They believed that performance evaluation was used to control employees to achieve these objectives). Wright and Race (2004) concur that a well-administered and fair performance evaluation, which consisted of agreed measurable objectives and development needs of employees will help an organization to achieve a competitive edge,however, they cautioned that any action plans discussed, must be followed through to ensure that the system does not lose credibility.

Bowles and Coates (1993) noted that performance evaluation is gaining in importance as a tool in the management process; its use is also being adopted by the public sector and covering different occupational groups including the blue-collar and secretarial employees. From their June 1992 postal survey of 250 WestMidlands (in the United Kingdom (U.K) large companies from all industries, they found that these companies were experiencingproblems with their performance evaluation, but considered the system beneficial in order of priority:

1. In the process of communication between employer and employees;
2. In defining performance expectations; and
3. in identifying training needs.

Dean, Kathawal and Wayland (1992), on the other hand stated that performance evaluations has two broad purposes:

1. As an evaluative function in making decisions on administrative matters such as merit pay, promotions, demotions, transfers and retention of employees; and
2. As a developmental function to identify training anddevelopment plan.

They cited a 1984 survey conducted by the American Management Association of 588 managers, whereby more than 85 percent of the respondents reported that performance evaluation was used commonly for compensation purposes. Other uses included counselling, training and development, promotion, staff planning, retention decisions and as primary source of documentation for potential legal problems involving employees. However, the study found that the process did not always work as a motivational tool due to low level of trust, and that employees perceive that the measurement of their performance is not assessed accurately.

Bowles and Coates (1993) study on the other hand found that the main use of the performance evaluation process was to achieve work goals, as an accountable and control mechanism aimed at the individual employees and not as a training tool to benefit the employees. They also found secondary usages of the process which included relationship building, benchmarking of performance, and identifying development and training needs.

In New Zealand (NZ), Taylor and O' Driscoll (1993) conducted a study to investigate how and why New Zealand undertook the performance evaluation process, and what difficulties they encountered during implementation. (They randomly selected 89 private and public organizations each with at least 300 employees). They found that:

1. Many organizations use their performance evaluation system to serve two functions, administrative and developmental, and they felt that there was no conflict in meeting both;
2. Private organizations were more likely than public ones to use performance evaluation information in decisions concerningterminations, layoffs, transfer and new assignments;
3. Public organizations are more likely to use the performance evaluation information to meet legal requirements, which is likely to reflect the impact of stronger Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) legislation in the public sector;
4. Virtually all respondents indicated that pay was informallylinked with performance evaluations;
5. Most of the organizations, conducted a yearly evaluation butinterestingly a large proportion conducted appraisaldiscussion more than once a year.
6. For most organizations the appraisee's manager is the main contributor to the performance ratings (appraisees themselves do play a significant role, however peers and customers do not play a formal role); and;
7. They believed their systems were, on average, only somewhat effective and most mentioned modifications that

they had made recently or were considering in the near future.

Taylor and O' Driscoll (1993) concluded that performance evaluation systems in large New Zealand organizations appeared to be working with some success in achieving developmental and administrative purposes. In general there was no sign of a conflictbetween the purposes and therefore there was no cause for separate processes, but some improvements were warranted.

It would seem that the primary reason for performanceevaluation is fundamental to a number of important organizational (administrative) decisions regarding pay and promotion, and theprocess allows an organization to measure and evaluate an individual employee's behaviour and accomplishments over a specific period of time (Spinks et al. 1999). Ultimately, this raises employees' performance to ensure that the organization achieves its aims and objectives and to give it a competitive edge (Harisson&Goulding, 1997).

As a control device, Henderson (980) found that performance evaluation influences practically all human resources functions such as identifying job responsibilities, and expected tasks output, determining appropriate and fair methods and instruments for appraising performance, providing feedback to employees on their performance, identifying employees skills and knowledge, assisting in establishing an appropriate training and development plan that will link individual employees requirements to organizational demands, therefore it frequently influences one-off performance bonus payments, terminations, demotions, transfers, promotion and learning opportunities. Henderson added that the manager conducting the performance evaluation is then put in the position of judging the employee and acting on their judgements. This inevitably involves the possibility of rater errors exacerbated further if there is a personality conflict between the manager and employee. Arnold and Pulich (2003). Rater errors include:

1. Horn effect (where one negative aspect of an employee or their performance is used to generalize into their overall poor appraisal rating);
2. Halo effect (the opposite of horn effect where one positive characteristic of an employee or their positive performance is used to generalized into an overall high rating);
3. Similar-to-me-effect (whereby an appraiser rates someone perceived accurately or inaccurately to have the samecharacteristics as them);
4. Tendency towards the mean or extremes (evaluating employees as "average" or may be too strict or too lenient in their assessments);
5. Status effect (where managers are rated more highly than lower and graded employee); and
6. Biases such as gender, age and ethnicity. Arnold &Pulich (2003).

Also, Spins et al (1999) commented that in recent years,performance evaluation is becoming a tool to discipline or dismiss staff and used when there is an organization restructuring. This suggests that performance evaluation is seen as a tool to control employees, and sadly according to Edmonstone (1996) empirical evidence suggested that this is true, and that development of staff are often ignored. Wilson and Nutley (2003) agreed that evaluation can be seen as one of a number of indirect forms of control, which work by emphasizing the need for staff to be committed to what the organization wants them to do. It is no wonder that there isuneasiness towards performance evaluation.

Besides assisting organization in compensation decisions, performance evaluation is also used as a development tool for employees (Anderson, 2002), and according to Johnson (1995), in New Zealand (NZ) and the UK, the dominant use of performance evaluation was to assess training and development needs and promotability, and that its use for remuneration was largely an American practice. Wilson & Western (2001) also commented that performance evaluation is widely regarded as the main instrument for identifying training and development needs at the individual level. However, even though their findings from a case study, taking the perspectives of the appraisees pointed out that performanceevaluation was used to identify training and development needs it concluded that:

1. there are varying degrees of involvement and commitment to appraisal process.
2. majority of training and development plans were directly related to the requirements of the short-term job requirements rather than long-term development and advancement and only a small proportion were involved with general personal development.
3. some of the training and development plans were unachievable because they were inappropriate, too expensive, lack of time for or indifference and apathy towards the plans; and
4. It is viewed as another task completed and can be forgotten until the following year. (Wilson and Western case study was a medium-sized independent hospital in the UK).

As a control device, Henderson (1980) found that performance evaluation influences practically all human resources such as identifying job responsibilities, and expected tasks output, determining appropriate and fair methods and instruments forevaluating performance, providing feedback to employees on their performance, identifying employees skills and knowledge, assisting in establishing an appropriate training and development plan that will link individual employees requirements to organizations demands.

2.3 Evaluation Purpose of Performance Evaluation

Olagboye (2005) has identified six (6) purposes of performance appraisal:

1) It provides feedback information to the civil servants about how their performance on the job is being rated by their superiors.
2) Identification of training needs- Additional training required by each employee to improve his performance is identified.
3) Performance appraisal helps locating officers' schedule in the same grade to a job at a similar level in another occupation group or cadre.
4) Formal performance appraisal also plays a major role in identifying officers who are well fitted for promotion on merit.
5) It makes it possible to make forecast based result, of the long term potential of serving officers.
6) This is unspoken but crucial purpose which formal performance evaluation serves. 'It helps to maintain a semblance of discipline among civil servants and in the civil service"

In the same vein, Halachmi (1992) enumerates the assorted functions which performance appraisal may serve with respect to data collection to include:

i) Providing a mechanism for getting subordinates to contribute to management development: In this case, the review concentrates on the past, with special emphasis on the subordinates perspectives and perception of the reasons for it. Performance appraisal in this context is used as a vehicle for alerting and educating supervisors about the factors that influence performance.

ii) It helps employees to understand their responsibilities and their relationship to organizational goals.

iii) It informs employees about management expectations. The appraisal in this manner becomes an instrument for reducing uncertainty and helping employees focus their efforts in the desired direction. It provides employees with periodic feedback about how well they are meeting performance level.

iv) The information collection as part of the appraisal is used by human resources management department for making decisions about training (re-training), compensation, promotion, transfer or separation. The information may be used to make decisions about a single employee, a group of employees or the whole organization.

v) Appraisal process assists in generating data which the organization may need for dealing with outside agencies and organizations like trade unions, courts labour/employment/security agencies. Some of the data may be collected in order to comply with legal or contractual requirements. Furthermore, appraisal is imperative as it helps in collecting data for assessing the need to redesign job, organizational structure or organogram, work practices and standard operating procedures.

vi) Performance appraisal is used for asserting authority, establishing self confidence and meeting supervisor's need for a sense of power, control and status

Fajana (2002) gives the following as the board uses of performance appraisal

- Discussion of performance improvement
- Identification of potential for development
- Identification of training needs
- Validation of job's descriptions
- Getting appraisees's feelings about their jobs, supervisors and the organizations for which they work.
- Identification of desirable changes in employee attitude and in the organization
- Obtaining information about hidden work process
- Setting job targets and objectives
- Placating impatience among appraisers
- Improving morale
- Rewarding performance

2.4 Evaluation Methods

There are various methods of evaluating staff performance.For convenience, Pratt and Bennett (1979) group the various methods into four broad categories as follows:

1. **Comparison Methods:**

a) **Ranking:** The appraiser is required to place employees in a rank order on the basis of their overall performance. Thus the best member of staff is ranked first and the worst last. While initially the method appears very simple, its application may be less simple, particularly when large numbers of staff are involved. Two variations have been derived which attempt to reduce this difficulty: Paired Comparison and Alternative Ranking.

b) **Paired Comparison:** Using this method, each employee is compared with every other employee on a one-to-one basis. When all comparisons have been made, the number ofoccasions on which each member of staff has been judged better than a colleague may be totaled and a rank order produced. The number of comparisons which must be made may be calculated by the formula:

$$\text{Number of comparisons} = \frac{N(N - 1)}{2}$$

Where N is the number of employees to be appraised.

Thus if 10 staff are involved the number of comparisons is 45; if 50 are involved, the number is 1.225. This is the major problem. Since the number of comparisons increases geometrically as the number of employees involved grows, the method becomes unwieldy when applied to largenumbers. One solution is to divide the original group into smaller groups to which the method may then be applied.

(c) **Alternative Ranking:** A common criticism of simple ranking is that, while it is usually easy to identify the best employees and the worst, determining a rank order between these extremes is less easy. Alternative ranking is intended to helpovercome this difficulty. The appraiser is provided with a list of employees to be ranked. He is then asked to identify thebest employee on the list and the worst. These are then deleted from the list and recorded on a ranking sheet. The process is then repeated until all employees have been removed from the list and transferred to the ranking sheet.

Ranking has one major advantage. Since appraisals rangefrom best to worst, the method virtually eliminates constant errors,and errors of central tendency. However, Hussaini (2010) argued that it has a number of major limitations:

1. The method indicates which staffers are better than others. What it does not indicate is in what way and to what degree they are better, thus severely limiting the usefulness of theinformation gained.
2. Problems may arise when attempting to compare or integrate two or more sets of rankings produced by different appraisers. The best in one ranking being only perhaps average inanother.
3. Appraisers are required to rank on the basis of a single factor overall performance.

d) **Forced Distribution**

As mentioned above, when dealing with a large number ofemployees, ranking and, in particular, paired comparison may become unwieldy. As an alternative the forced distribution method may be employed. The assessor is required to distribute staff into a fixed number of categories in accordance with predeterminedpercentages, e.g. 10 percent excellent, 20 percent above average, 40 percent average, 20 percent below average, 10 percent poor. Again, the method controls assessor tendency to avoid the issue by rating the majority of staff as 'average' or sometimes 'above average' and at the same time helps to reduce constant errors.However, it is only of real value with larger groups, since with a small group of employees, each selected for his ability to do his job, such a pattern would probably not tend to emerge.

2) Linear Scales

The linear scale or graphic scale is without doubt the most commonly used of appraisal methods. The assessor is given a form in respect of each employee to be appraised. The form lists a number of factors or characteristics against each of which is a scale. The appraiser is required to indicate on each scale his assessment of the employee in respect of that factor or characteristic. This may mean placing a tick somewhere on a numerical scale or in one of aseries of boxes each representing a distinct degree of the factor under consideration.

Careful selection of factors to be assessed is essential. Not only must they be relevant to the type of employee being appraised, but also, wherever possible, capable of objective measurement. Two types of factor tend to be used - traits, e.g. reliability, cooperation; and results, e.g. quantity and quality of work. While most forms of this kind use a mixture of the two, there is an obvious advantage in emphasizing results since this tends to tend greater objectivity (Ibid, 2001).

Typically, assessors are required to rate each employee in respect of a dozen or more factors. However, as the number of factors increases, overlapping tends to occur making it more difficulton identify accurately the factor to be appraised. Indeed, it has been suggested that, for practical purposes, only two factors need be considered - ability to do the present job and quality of performance. The linear scale method is relatively simple to design, understand and use. No reliance is placed on the ability of the appraiser to express himself in writing, and information is provided in standard form. However, the major limitation remains subjectivity. The fact that a tick appears somewhere along *a* scale or in a box in no way guarantees that a careful, objective, weighing of all the facts has occurred. To a limited degree, however, safeguards may bebuilt in by careful form design and concentration on questions whichmay be objectively answered, i.e. results rather than trait based. .

3) Behavioral Methods

a) **Critical Incident Method**

This method, developed by Flanagan (1949) relies on the hypothesis that there are certain outstanding types of behaviour critical to job success or failure. Supervisors must identify and record these incidents as they occur together with the circumstances leading to them, action taken by the employee concerned, and the consequences of that action.

While it has been suggested that, having identified critical incidents, they might be ranked and weighted providing a basis for a rating score, Flanagan clearly states that the proper application of the method is in the provision of a record of performance to be used as a basis of individual counseling and development. However, heexpresses the concern that supervisors may merely store up records of "bad" incidents, unloading them on subordinates at regular intervals without concern for development or counseling.

b) **Forced-Choice Method**

The assessor is provided with a number of groups of two ormore descriptive statements. Within each group, all statements are of apparent equal worth. The appraiser is required to indicate which statement in each group most nearly applies to the employee underassessment. For example, an early study carried out in connection with the evaluation of training staff contained the following favourable descriptions:

1) Patient with slow learners and Lectures with confidence

2) Acquaints class with objectives for each lesson in advance

Also, the following unfavourable descriptions:

1) Does not answer all questions to the satisfaction of students.

2) Supporting details are not relevant.

While each statement may appear equally recommendatory or damning, the assessor is forced to choose only one, even if he feels that all are equally applicable or non-applicable. In this way, the method virtually eliminates problems of appraiser subjectivity. However, in what way is the choice meaningful?

The behaviour of outstandingly effective and ineffective employees is observed and described. Groups of descriptions are then collected together which while appearing to be equally favourable or unfavourable, in fact have been found to discriminate between above and below average performance.

Thus in the example given above, certain statements havebeen found to describe outstandingly good teachers, while otherdescribes those whose performance is consistently poor. At firstsight, however, each group of descriptions appears equally favourable or unfavorable. The statements within each group maybe described as having an equal favorability index, but differingdiscrimination indices.

However, its use tends to be limited by a number of inherent problems. The method is of no immediate value as a means of counselling or staff development since neither assessor nor the employee concerned can determine how well or badly the employeehas done. Because of this uncertainty and the necessary secrecysurrounding the formulation of the groups of descriptions, it isunlikely that the method will be acceptable particularly to the employee. Further, the appraiser may resent being forced to make judgements he does not accept. Finally, like other behavioural methods already described, the whole process ultimately hinges on an initial series of potentially subjective judgements about which staff are and are not 'successful'.

2.5 Gap in Literature

From the literature review extensive studies have been carried out in usage of performance evaluation in both public and private organization in advanced countries. In this direction, scholars like Baker, 1988; Cleveland, 1989; Bowles and Coates, 1993; Taylor and O'Prisocll, 1993; Mani, 2002; Anderson, 2002; Enana, 2005; Olagboye, 2005; Kolade 2008; Adeleke, 2009; Hussaini, 2010 among other discussed the subjected focus. Such studies argued that performance evaluation services broad purposes. For instance it was argued that performance evaluation can be used for evaluative purposes in making decisions on administrative matters such as merit-pay, promotions demotions, transfers, retention of employees etc. It can also be used for developmental purposes such as identification of training and development need in employees. Improper documentation of data is also an effect of employing performance evaluation solely for the purpose of determining staff promotion, at the neglect of other uses; such as identification of training and developmental needs of staff.

This study therefore evaluates staff performance in Cocoa-Research Institute of Nigeria (CRIN) with a view to examining the effectiveness of the evaluation method and evaluation instruments employed by the institute.

3.1Study Population

The study population consists of the 727 workforce of Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria (CRIN). The category of officers that were considered for the study was from Research, Administration and Finance, Engineering, Plantation and Estate Management departments of Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria. The population of study covers both the junior and senior staff of the above mentioned departments.

3.2 Sampling Procedure

The sampling technique adopted for this study is Random sampling to determine the actual target population. The study took cognizance of the four main departments into which the Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria were divided. The four departments are: Research, Administration and Finance, Engineering and plantation and Estate Management Departments. The total number of staff in these departments as at the time this study was conducted was 727. From the total; Research staff were 136 in number, Administration and Finance were 120, Engineering were 223 in number while Plantation and Estate Management were 256 in number.

3.3Research Instruments

The two basic research instruments of primary data collection adopted to obtain necessary information for this study is

i. *Interviews:* Interviews were also conducted among 50 officers including four Heads of Departments to generate information on the subject matter. The researcher designed three interview questions bordering on assessment of staff through the annual performance evaluation report.

3.4 Data Collection

The study made use of both primary and secondary data. The primary sources were in depth interviews; while the secondary sources of data include publications such as textbooks, journals, publications, official documents and internet sources.

3.5Descriptive Analysis of Data through Interview

Interviews were conducted to seek information from 50 officers of the institute and the four (4) heads of departments of the Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria. The question are:

Question 1:What do you understanding by performance appraisal?

In answering the above question, the all the respondents including four Heads of Department opined that performance appraisal is meant for assessing staff performance in order to determine whether they deserve to be promoted to the next grade. However, thirty of the respondents including two of the heads of department added that performance appraisal can be employed to determine training and developmental needs of staff while one of the officers believe that it is the responsibility of individual staff to determine his or her training needs and seek appropriate means of meeting such needs.

Question 2:Comment on the procedure of appraising staff in the institute

All the resondents commented that the process of appraising staff is not followed to the letter. They believe that it encourages a lot of eye service among staff. For instance one of the officers stressed the fact that many of the staff; especially the junior officers improve on their performance extraordinarily in the year they are due for promotion. A staff who doesn't come early to the office would suddenly become punctual and does a lot of things that would make his superior notice him that he is hardworking.

Furthermore, one of the officers interviewed commented that most supervising officers do not hold discussion with their staff concerning performance appraisal. All they do is to collect the APER forms, complete their own section and forward it for further necessary action.

Question 3:Comment on problems associated with APER instrument of appraisal for staff assessment?

All the respondents including the heads of departments commented that the APER instrument of appraisal in highly subjective. They agreed that it does not encourage the supervising officers to give their candid opinion about their staff. Twenty of the respondents including heads of departments particularly stressed the fact that most supervising officers do not give the assessment so as not be seen as stumbling blocks to the progress of their staff. Officers, who do not deserve high ratings, are often rated very high because of their relationships with the supervising officers.

On what they could be done to address the problem of the APER instrument of appraisal; they all recommended the staff should be exposed to both written and oral interview. None of the respondents agreed that the APER instrument of appraisal should be discarded with, they only suggested that staff appraisal should be cumulative and that of other forms of appraisal should be introduced; to complement the APER form.

4.1Conclusion

This study has assessed the performance evaluation of staff in Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria. The study was able to establish the fact that the performance evaluation procedure is not what it is expected to be. The procedure has little or no significant effect on staff performance and work related habits. The evaluation instrument is equally subjective and not adequate to measure staff performance objectively.

Furthermore, the study made some recommendations which the Institute can employ in order to have effective staff performance evaluation.

4.2Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are hereby suggested for effective staff performance evaluation.

1. There should be appraisal interview as part and parcel of the current opening system where the appraisers and appraises will discuss the performance and progress of the appraises in relation to the specified goals of set targets. The problems solving method of appraisal interview, where the superior abandon the role of judges and become coaches/councilors is being suggested. Every employee wants to know where exactly he stands in the organization whether he is doing well or not and how bright his future in the organization is.
2. The aspect of conducting appraisal of staff performance every year should not be handled with levity. All staff should complete APER forms and be assessed annually. It is not expected that forms are completed and staff assessed only in the year he or she is due for promotion. The danger of completing forms in the year a staff is due for promotion is that staff may be complacement for two years (if time eligibility is 3 years) and then "wake up" to be good in the third year because of promotion. If a staff knows that assessments of his or her performance for the two previous years will eventually count, such a staff will be cautious and work hard during the preceding year of promotion. The evaluation and appraisal of staff performance should be cumulative.
3. Some degree of expertise and skill is needed in handling good appraisal exercise starting from the design of the format, the completion and the appraisal proper. All members must have a good general knowledge of the system and formal training should be given where desirable; followed with constant seminars. The performance evaluation process should be aligned to the stated objectives of the organization, so that it would not be seen as pointless and unnecessary.
4. Performance appraisal should be a continuous exercise rather than a "post mortem" exercise which is currently the situation. For its effectiveness, it is being suggested that a written report (which is to be confidential) should accompany its application in the Public Service. Such report would contain the cumulative assessment of the subordinate officers by their immediate supervisors.

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